

6.
THE SUBSTANCE

OF

A Speech

ON

NEGRO SLAVERY,

DELIVERED AT

THE REV. MR. BARKER'S CHAPEL,

HIGH STREET, DEPTFORD,

On Tuesday Evening, 2nd November, 1830,

THE REV. J. T. BARKER IN THE CHAIR.

BY

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DEPTFORD:

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1830.

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&c.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

IN rising to support the petition, which will be submitted to you, I hasten to say, that I come forward upon the present occasion, as a determined, an inflexible, an uncompromising enemy to negro slavery. It is a source of much satisfaction to me, to observe many persons present, whom I have addressed on a former occasion, upon the same subject;—for although the system of negro slavery demands all the force of intellect in its defence, yet it requires only a sense of justice, an universal sentiment of execration, and a determined intention to do unto others, “as we would they should do unto us.” It requires I say, only the belief and practice of that one golden precept of our holy religion, to induce us, at once, to hate, to despise, and to abolish it.

A British audience has never yet turned a deaf ear, to an appeal made on behalf of their degraded fellow creatures, and I am sure you must all feel such a just sense of horror at the thralldom, which is entailed upon the black, by his merciless owner, who differs from him only in the colour of his skin, that it would be impossible for me to appeal to you in vain ; and although you have not been eye witnesses, to the debasing, the demoralizing effects of slavery, yet you have such a firm conviction of its horrors, that I would venture to say, there is not one person present, who is so destitute of all the finer feelings of human nature, as to be insensible to the claims of the slaves to their liberty, and so scathed by the fire of prejudice, as not to call loudly and lustily, with a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, that the slaves shall be free.

It may not be improper to state to you, that I have been through the whole of the West India colonies—to every place of importance in each colony—to a great many public meetings—and on a great many estates :—being engaged in a legal and political enquiry, it formed part of my duty to watch the legislative and judicial proceedings of the colonists : and when any opportunity arose, I never failed to inform myself of the real condition—the real feelings of the slave, and to consider the most rational and practical methods of emancipating them. With these advantages, I feel

that what I now undertake is a duty—as an Englishman, and above all as a christian, I feel bound to step forward and plead the cause of those beings, who have no government but that of the whip—whose blood and muscles, have as much become articles of trade and of profit, as those of the horse ;—not being subjects, they have no king to whom they can direct their cries—not being free, they have none to whom they can make known their misery ;—by their masters, degraded, persecuted, and badly fed—and by the legislature of the land of their captivity, treated as goods and chattels—they look in vain for that assistance, which would restore them to that place in society, for which nature had intended them. It behoves us therefore to step forward in their behalf, if it be only to shew, that England and Englishmen, will no longer be identified with West India slavery ;—if it be only to obliterate that foul blot, which has so long been a stain upon this country ;—it behoves us, as the subjects of a munificent monarch—as a great and free nation, to extend liberty to all the sons and daughters, whether black or white, of the West India settlements :—and I may say, it is a duty that we owe to ourselves—to our own feelings—to the claims of pity—and the still more imperative claims of justice—to the loud call of nature, of wisdom, of virtue—to the call of religion, and of God !—to proclaim, that liberty, the birthright of Englishmen, shall henceforth, and

for evermore, be the birthright of the West India black ;—and if the voice of reason, of humanity, of pity—if the loud call of nature, and of justice, will not bring this to pass, let it be proclaimed, from England to England's most distant territories—let it be proclaimed with a voice of thunder, that the slaves must, and shall be free !

Who can behold the emaciated frame, the relics only of a man, a captive, in the last stage of his existence, contemptuously,—unfeelingly treated, and badly fed ? Who can behold it without horror, without indignation, without some emotions of pity and sympathy, without attempting in some measure, to make the gall of slavery less bitter to him ? and that if he cannot live himself to enjoy freedom, he may have the comfortable assurance of his children being blessed with it, so that he may say in his old age, with the blind patriarch, “ Lord ! now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the salvation of my country.”

When a person disengages himself from the ordinary concerns of life, and gives a proper scope to his reflection,—when he beholds 800,000 beings in chains, groaning under the hideous burdens of unmerited thralldom—checked in all their endeavours to raise themselves in this life—curbed in all their efforts to inform themselves—bridled by the tyrannical will of sordid and avaricious owners—and designated as beings unworthy of notice, undeserving of care, and incapable

of improvement ;—when I say, a person does this, and calls in reason and humanity to assist him in his lucubrations, nothing I think makes opposition more intolerable, and falsehood less bearable, than that of those unconscious miscreants, who dispute the claims of the slaves to liberty and redress. The sense of shame, the dread of exposure, the stings of conscience, which in ordinary cases frequently operate on individuals as the preventives of crime, are torpid or extinct in the breasts of those who sanction the nefarious and execrable system ; and notwithstanding the horrors of that system, perhaps there are no human beings less pitied than its victims, by those who live where the evils of their deplorable situation are aggravated by all those enormities, which the humane part of mankind have endeavoured to suppress ! It requires great local information, and a considerable share of the knowledge of human nature, to point out the distinct cause of this indifference to human suffering ; but what with local connection—party influence—animosity of party spirit—and individual interest,—I say what with these, the sympathy for the slave, generally and almost always, ceases to exist in the breasts of those who become connected with West India property ;—hence the opposition which is so frequently made to the abolition of slavery—hence the eagerness with which some persons support the degrading system :—when to these are added its immense profits,

it would be expecting too much from the slave dealer and his advocates, hardened as they are in crime—callous as they are to the sufferings of others—to forego so lucrative a trade ; it is our duty therefore, to undo that which he does, and do that which he leaves undone, to think and act for him, for he ought not to be less conscious of the claims of the slave to his liberty, than he is tenacious of the profits of slavery ; and neither is it so much from an aversion to liberty, as it is from a conviction that when the shackles of the slave shall be broken, the source of his wealth and luxury will vanish—that the sweat of the negro's brow—his toils and his blood, will no longer bring to him that mine of ill gotten wealth, which they have hitherto afforded. The same considerations, twenty years ago, induced the planters to struggle against the abolition of the slave trade, and a dispute was engendered upon that occasion, unexampled in its nature, duration, and consequences : in this struggle the trade was abolished—an act which raised the character of Englishmen, to a height which was before thought inaccessible to human effort ; the conduct of the abolitionists in this contest, was marked by promptitude, characterized by consistency, and formed a picture of overpowering grandeur and sublimity ; with *Mr. Wilberforce* at their head, the senate house rung with the cries of injured humanity ; by his side was arranged a powerful phalanx, of those who

belonged to the Society of Friends—the satellites of his glory, and the heralds of his fame—every good man raised his voice—every good senator exerted his influence,—till at last, the slave trader slunk to his haunt, like the wounded hydra, conscious of his wickedness and imbecility.

Thus fought, and thus triumphed the abolitionists over the slave trade,—a struggle which secured to England, glory such as never before blazed around her;—never was any other nation—never was any other body of men, the objects of such universal honor, admiration, and benediction.

With this example before us, we might exclaim with *Lalla Rookh*:—“*When shall the slave lay down at his feet his broken chains?*” Shall England be last in achieving this desirable object? The Infant Republics of South America, have universally declared themselves in favor of the emancipation of slaves—that of Columbia has passed a law, that all children born since the revolution shall be free at the age of eighteen; and *Bolivar*, exasperated by the conduct of the Spanish Authorities of Cuba, has threatened to declare the whole black population of that, and the remaining Colonies of Spain, free.

If sir, we turn our attention to Saint Domingo, a frightful prospect opens to our view—frightful as it concerns the white inhabitants. While that colony was under a divided government, the two conflicting parties engaged in their own struggles

for power, left unmolested the rest of the Atlantic islands ; but now that the whole island is under one consolidated authority, who can doubt that their attention has been drawn to the condition of their countrymen in the other islands, into which in spite of every precaution, emissaries will find their way, with the intention of inspiring the negroes with sentiments of liberty, and an anxious desire of breaking their bonds ? Who can for a moment doubt that this great island, under the dominion of a free negro population, situate in the very centre of the West Indies, and contiguous to the large and populous islands of Cuba and Jamaica on the one side, and Porto Rico on the other ; who I ask, can doubt that the government of that island, will take every occasion to stir up the surrounding slaves to insurrection ?

If then the danger be imminent—if the lives and immense property of the colonists be thus exposed to destruction, some plan at least ought to be tried, which may avert, if possible, so tremendous a catastrophe.

Among the various subjects which have agitated society, perhaps none have engendered so much enmity, invective, and dispute, as the abolition of slavery. We are told that the negroes are well fed and happy ;—we are told that if they are emancipated, liberty will prove a curse to them—that they will not be so well off then as they are at present.

When sir, we consider the general good conduct of the slaves, under the most intolerable burdens—under the severest privations—when we see that these poor benighted, degraded beings, submit and bow to the nod of their rulers, with so much fortitude, with such wonderful subserviency—when we see that upon an estate of 500 slaves, there are but three or four whites to keep them in subjection; and that these 500, notwithstanding the injuries which are daily inflicted upon them, will submit and work, with all the precision of an army of disciplined soldiers:—what I would ask, may we not expect, when liberty with all its blessings shall wait upon them. “Without liberty,” says the *Abbe Raynal*, “or the property of ones own body, and the enjoyment of ones own mind, no man can be either a husband, a father, a relation, or a friend—he hath neither a country, a fellow-citizen, nor a God. The slave impelled by the wicked man, and who is the instrument of his wickedness, is inferior to the dog let loose by the Spaniard upon the American; for conscience, which the dog hath not, still remains with the man. If there be not any power under the heavens, which can change my nature, and reduce me to the state of brutes, there is none which can dispose of my liberty—God is my father, and not my master—I am his child, and not his slave. How is it possible that I should grant to political power, what I refuse to Divine Omnipotence?”

But, we are told that the slaves are more happy and comfortable than the lower classes of the Mother country;—let us enquire into the truth of this assertion,—let us see in what this happiness consists:—it cannot be knowledge, for there is not a more benighted race of men in the whole world, than the West India slaves; of the 800,000 I would confidently assert, there are not fifty that can read or write! Then again, as to the comforts and luxuries of life,—their huts are wretched tents of mud and reeds—they are fed almost wholly and exclusively upon pickled herrings and corn meal! The worst food handed from the door of the work-house in England, is infinitely superior both in quantity and quality, to that dealt out to the negroes, in the West Indies. I was at Barbadoes about Christmas, and then they received ample allowance; the children had for breakfast, vegetables and fish, and for dinner, yams and meat; and grown persons were allowed a large piece of pickled pork, with a moderate quantity of spirits. But mark ye! this was no criterion,—from the first of January, until the twenty-fifth of December following, they were allowed scarcely any thing but a pint of corn meal per day. At another island, where the owner had chosen one of the most trusty and apt of his own slaves for his butler,—even he, who rendered his master every service, was not allowed a plate of meat,—No! every scrap that came from his master's table, must be

conveyed to the butlery untouched, and the worthy and industrious butler, stinted to his pint of corn meal. On many of the estates, in the islands to leeward, they are allowed but two quarts of corn meal and four herrings per week, for about six months in the year; and for the remaining six months, one day in each week is allowed them for the cultivation of their provision grounds, so that they support themselves. The laws by which they are governed are very arbitrary; and some sections of the statute, deny the slave the natural right of defending himself against the attacks of his fellow slaves; so in assaults and affrays, the innocent and guilty are equally liable to punishment, and in homicide there are no legal gradations of guilt—the slave who kills another, under whatever circumstances, shall surely die, is the stern fiat of *West India justice*:—several other clauses of the statute evince a harshness and severity, quite in character with a land of slavery,—they breathe the sanguinary spirit of a *Nero* or *Domitian*, but through the vigilant exertions of the abolitionists, they are happily enforced with something of the clemency of a *Titus*. Then again, they are constantly labouring under the apprehension of being removed, or having their children torn for ever from them; upon which occasions, scenes frequently occur, not less affecting than that of an English parent taking leave of a child, who is consigned to an ignominious death; added to these, they are subject to the caprices of

an absolute tyrant, at whose beck and nod they must submit, even to death itself—they are compelled to labour incessantly, without any prospect of reward, for persons whom they despise—their daily experience is this, that unless they submit without murmur or complaint, they will be flogged to a state of complete exhaustion, and then restored, so as to be able to endure a repetition of it. They all suffer more or less from the fetters of slavery; it is true there are some humane and charitable owners, and the lives and happiness of the slaves, chiefly depend upon their conduct towards them; some are disciplinarians, some misers, some kind, and others cruel, and a partial observer may easily be deceived. It is proverbial, that the planters never spare any pains, never slacken in any exertions, to disguise the real condition of their slaves, being so deeply interested in the opinion which a casual observer may form of slavery; in order to entrap visitors in this snare, nothing is spared by them, to give an appearance of happiness to the victims of their oppression—they may point out, one or two comfortable huts, and one or two happy slaves; but most of them strive for freedom all their lives, and at last die in bonds,—others by vast care and economy purchase their freedom, but through the intrigues, and pretended claims of abandoned villains, never enjoy it.

There are different classes of negroes; some fall little short of the pagan, and live as it were in

heathen darkness, and never are led to look for their freedom ;—others there are, whose manners, and actions fully entitle them to immediate emancipation, and nothing is wished for by them, but to be free ; they strive to merit this reward, but alas ! they are transferred from place to place, from person to person, and at last, with dissipated hope, yield to the jaws of death. This is the real condition of those beings, who are represented as being happier than the peasantry of the Mother country—this is the real condition of the West India slaves—captives !—who drag on a wretched and miserable existence ; deprived of the comforts of religious reflection, and contemplation—harassed night and day in crop time, without one gleam of hope of an amelioration of their present state, and without the faintest idea of a state of future retribution—desponding and despairing—the sugar which they cultivate, would not be sweeter to them, than their liberty.

And, now then ye degraders of humanity !—the best of your slaves are allowed but one pint of corn meal for their day's allowance, which is no more, and no better, than that which every gentleman's sporting dog has in England. They are flogged—abused and mutilated, whether feeble, decrepid, or lame,—spurred on to a laborious task, in a sultry climate, without encouragement or reward.

It has been contended, that the right of the

planters to their slaves, is paramount to the right of the slaves to their liberty ; but let me ask, how came they by this right ? How came they in possession of the slaves at all ?—They were stolen!—kidnapped and cajoled from their native country ; torn from their parents—their friends, and all those affections which made existence dear—dragged over the seas, to be given up to toil and labour all their lives, loaded with eternal hatred, as well they themselves, in their own persons, as the offspring which interested calculation would allow them to beget ; and all this to be employed in clearing the fields of some man, of whom they know nothing—who called himself their master, who enjoyed the fruits of their labour, the colour of whose skin, was sufficient to keep him at an infinite distance from them. To the harsh definition of the naturalist, “ that a luckless mortal may be born in a degree of latitude too high, or too low, for wisdom or for wit ;” oppressions, political and legislative were added, and daily aggravated, by vulgar prejudice and popular insult ; in short, all the refinements of barbarity, were added to the horrors of slavery, and this was done, in spite of the laws of God and man, for there is not one statute, not one section in the statute book of this country, that makes it lawful to traffic in the blood of our fellow creatures. *Cardinal Ximenes* refused his assent to a proposal which was made to him, to transport slaves to America. *Charles* the

fifth in his maturer wisdom abolished the trade, after having been long friendly to it. *Leo* the tenth declared that not only the christian religion, but nature itself cried out against slavery. *Queen Elizabeth* stigmatized the kidnapping of the Africans, as a detestable act, which would call down the vengeance of heaven upon its perpetrators; and even the weak and cold-hearted *Louis* the thirteenth, could be prevailed upon to sanction the practice, only, by his being told that its victims would thus enjoy the precious advantage of conversion to the christian faith. Thus we find by recurring to history, so far from this paramount right being established by the planter, it is not only unsupported by any legal, historical, or traditional evidence, but on the contrary, all the evidence that can be gathered, goes to prove, that there is no right at all existing in the planters to their slaves;—that so far from their being able to establish a paramount civil right, by adducing legal and justiciary evidence, in support of it—so far I say from their being able to do this;—every law, human and divine—every right, civil and natural, was openly and avowedly violated, before they could so much as place *one* being in that state of bondage, in which they are now desirous of keeping *eight hundred thousand*; and they have no precedents to refer to, except those lawless acts of rapacity and oppression, to enable them to perpetuate it; but even allowing, (which was by no means

the case) that they had the sanction of our forefathers, to commence and carry on, an interminable system of slavery, we ought not to be the less desirous of abolishing it for that reason ; are we to connive at existing evils and abuses, because our forefathers connived at them ? No ! let us on the contrary shew our superiority, by checking vice, in defiance of the precedents held out to us, though they may have existed from the beginning of the world.

Those sir, who are well read in the history of different nations, find that many of the evils and abuses which existed in former times, were finally rectified, as the world became enlightened ; and it is to be hoped that slavery, though now looked upon as lawful by some, will cause our posterity to wonder how it could possibly have existed at all, when time with its ameliorating influence, shall have allayed the spirit of party feeling, which now exists respecting it :—we now read with considerable indignation, of that barbarous traffic in human blood—the slave trade ; and I apprehend, when slavery shall be no more, posterity will blame our blindness and apathy, for allowing a vestige of it to remain. No liberal minded man can say, because a slave is lodged, clothed, and fed, that he stands in no need of liberty ;—a great philosopher has observed, that “ food will satisfy a horse or a dog, but mankind look for something more.” The negro however, is neither well fed, nor treated

kindly—he is a mere nullity in the scale of creation, and treated not even with the kindness that a dog or a horse deserves—he is only the instrument whereby money is made—not for himself, but for his master ;—a word, a gesture condemns him—his oath is not taken in a court of law—and in short, he is born only to drink the bitter draught of slavery, and the scarcely less bitter inheritance of misery and tears.

It has been said, by those who are not very scrupulous in making assertions, that if the slaves were made free, they would rather lie down and die, than work ; but let me ask, who can judge of the industry of those who have groaned all their lives under the fetters of slavery ? at present their reason is narrowed, from the shackled state they have ever lived in ; their feelings are relaxed, and all their sense of manly pride is lost, by the series of disasters they have hitherto encountered. Industry appears to them disgusting, because it has ever been to them, unproductive of comfort or benefit ;—they have no hopes to rouse them to exertion—no fears to warn them against want—no chance or opportunity to raise themselves to a higher sphere than that in which they were born—no thought to prompt them to be active or vigilant—no sentiment to excite admiration,—and pity in the colonies has shed all her tears ! But how soon would they emerge from this indolent and lethargic state, when animated by the promise of

freedom ; how differently would they act when they found that industry would make them rich,—learning would soon be diffused among them—religion would soon have its influence upon their minds and manners, instead of their grovelling in the worst and lowest employments of life, terrified by the whip, or scourged by the hand of sordid and tyrannical masters—each would be contemplating and recounting the issues of his labour—their minds would soon be expanded, to the ordinary limits of more enlightened beings—gratitude would inspire them with kindness and respect—liberty would cherish hope, and suppress fear—they would feel the blessings of an unshackled life. Oh liberty ! who can recount all the blessings which would accompany thee ?

Persons of the least conception, must be aware of the difference it would make in them ; at present their only care is to shrink from their labour, and the only object of their artifice is to escape being punished,—and who can blame them ? If they work, they go unrewarded, and their labour is unnoticed—if they are idle, they are punished ; and to those of an indolent disposition, or imbecile frame, the labour is as arduous, as the punishment is severe. The negroes in general, are very mild, inoffensive, and peaceable ; full of submission, rather subject to passion, but capable of the most unlimited forgiveness ; they are very conscientious, and if suspected of any crime of which they

have been guilty, they betray themselves by the symptoms of guilt—for they have it not in their power to dissemble, notwithstanding their colour, which screens them from any manifestations of guilt arising in the blood :—as to doing violence to each other, or to any human being, they refrain from it under the most aggravating circumstances, even in their present ignorant and unenlightened state ; and although they will occasionally plunder, murder is a crime of which they are so seldom guilty, that it has scarcely found a name in colonial history ;—indeed their conduct is exemplary, for persons in their abject state. Such is the general character of those beings, to whom it is said liberty will prove a curse, that they would rather lie down and die, than work ;—but in further answer to this specious pretext for the prolongation of slavery, let me call your attention to a class of negroes in the island of Tortola, called the Nottinghams.

Upon the death of a *Mr. Nottingham*, a Quaker, they were made free, and the concurrent testimony of all Europeans who have visited that island, is highly favourable to the docile and tractable disposition of these people ; in them we see before us, the practical effects of emancipation, as well as a full answer to every objection that is made to it. Their houses are neat and clean—their grounds are well cultivated, and upon the whole,

they are a very respectable class of people ; they are exempt from all the demoralizing consequences of the sunday slave market—they keep the sabbath, and instruct their children in religion and morality ; in short, they enjoy all the innocent recreations, and possess all the advantages of free people ; and some of them accumulate wealth. The slaves on the contrary, are abject and frequently immoral—they are strangers to religion and morality ; their sundays are spent in toil, revelry and dissipation, and perhaps there are no two objects in the island of Tortola, save and except the master and his slave, that form a greater contrast to each other, than the negro and the Nottingham ; and while slavery exists, we cannot expect it to be otherwise ; it cannot be supposed that men will work without some stimulus. The lightest work performed by compulsion, is worse than the most laborious, voluntarily undertaken. If we look at the slave at his daily task, in the absence of the driver, though robust and muscular as he may be, he is as reluctant, as if he were digging his own grave ; but upon his own grounds he is an emblem of industry and perseverance. Wages alone therefore would be as great a stimulus to industry, as that which he is actuated by on his own grounds. We may therefore guess pretty well the result of liberating the slaves ; and more particularly when they have been brought up in

the path of rectitude and virtue—religiously instructed, and restored to that place in society, for which providence intended them.

A plan has been proposed, (and in which I fully concur) to emancipate every female negro that is born, and let them serve their masters as apprentices; upon this plan, slavery would soon become extinct, as the offspring of these emancipated women, would be free born subjects; after this gradual course, the rest would soon become free, and thus we should look upon expiring slavery with pleasure, because its enlightened victims would participate in the glory of it. The wisdom and practicability of this plan is more obvious still, when we consider that West India property would be upon the decline; persons would not be so eager to purchase it, nor embark in speculation; and those who now possess slaves, or rather their grandchildren, would be duly forewarned of its total extinction; thus there could be but few sufferers; there could be none who would have reason to complain, and those who did, would deserve neither pity or commiseration. This plan however, will, it is probable, meet with the same reception from the planters which all others have,—it will be resisted, or scouted as unreasonable or visionary, and indeed, whatever step may be taken to effect the abolition of slavery, and whatever may be urged in its favor, either for or against the planters—however just, wise and

moderate it may be, it will be inveighed against by them : this is not to be wondered at, for what will not avarice do ? It was avarice that first prompted them to speculate, and avarice, which is bad at calculation, never reckons any thing but hogsheads of sugar,—induces them to forget the nature of man and of things ; but this will always be the case as long as gold is worth possessing, and the sooner we annihilate it the better. We have the authority of the immortal *Far* to proceed in this important and glorious task ; and so long as the slaves say, “ we wish to be free,” we are bound to do all in our power to procure for them this blessing ;—we have sufficient knowledge of their debased condition—the best and wisest of men are on our side—our conscience tells us it is a duty that we owe to them—we must begin—the impulse of charity will not allow us to rest—nothing can impede our progress, and no one can doubt our success—we know what our opposers are—we know that they have violated the laws of God and man, in bringing about the hateful system—they have robbed a whole race of men of every right and privilege—not of a coat or a cloak, but of their liberty—and not only smote them on the cheek, but have sometimes cut the thread of life asunder ! The abolition of slavery therefore, is no more than “ humanity dictates, and religion commands ;” and when we find the ruling principle of those who still wish it to exist, to be avarice,

we ought to press forward, smiling at the abuses and unjust reproaches of our enemies, until we break the fetters of slavery, and set its victims free.

Mankind have always been blind to their own errors and vices, and it appears in no greater degree, than that of earnestly persisting in the possession of West India property, and asserting that there is no harm in it, or injury done by it :— every person of common sensibility ought to shudder at it ; and all true christians would, (upon tolerable easy terms) relinquish their claims to such disgraceful property. But how different is the fact—while the question is merely in agitation, and while it is ably discussed by two parties, one for the slaves and the other for their owners, they employ the most opprobrious epithets against those who advocate the humane cause, and paint their characters in all the deadly colours, with which revenge, ribaldry and falsehood can furnish them. Instead of listening to the wise and moderate measures of the abolitionists, and obeying the dictates of the soundest politicians, and most worthy of our members, they cry out with redoubled energy that ruin awaits them, and that murder and plunder will ensue. If say they, the negroes are emancipated, private individuals who solely depend upon the labour of the slaves, whose grounds can only be cultivated advantageously by those who receive no wages, will be reduced to penury and

want ; and that nothing would so soon accelerate the downfall and misery of the rest of the inhabitants of the colonies, as making the slaves free ;—but all these obstacles have long since been obviated, by the statements of men of great experience in West India matters. The evils of existing slavery are very great, and the ills attending its termination, must unavoidably be felt by some ; but if we calculate the evils of existing slavery, and the ills attending its termination, we shall find of the two evils, slavery to be the greatest—and of the two, we ought to choose the least. If a thousand planters depended upon one slave, as in the present case a thousand slaves are deprived of their liberty by one planter, it would be impolitic to plunge a thousand in misery (if the abolition of slavery would make them miserable,) for the liberation of one ; but in the present case, a thousand are held in bondage for the support of one,—and that too, not for his bare support, (as some will have it,) but for his costly equipage, and sumptuous table. Comfort and peace, which thousands enjoy in England, from the industrious peasant to the most affluent stipendiary, are no more the privileges of the slave, than the produce of his labour—and why is it ? Because that power, which alone would enable him to obtain that comfort, is in the hands of one hard hearted monopolizer. Are those, who deem it no harm or sin to sacrifice the happiness, liberty and lives of others, merely for

the love of lucre, to be the objects of our consideration ? When I behold an individual holding in bondage four or five hundred slaves, and crying out for justice and mercy, at the same time that his slaves are praying for their liberty, I cannot but see in him something so unprincipled and inconsiderate, that I could almost say he deserves no consideration at all.

Sir, it cannot be admitted that one man has an *abstract right* of holding in bondage from five hundred to two thousand of his fellow creatures, or rather as many as he pleases. As a government exists for the well being of the people, and the good government of the nation, a slave comes as much under its protection as any other individual. If we look at slavery as an evil, and still suffer it to exist, nothing can be offered as an excuse for it; and as to abolishing it, no rule of policy, or claims of the planter, ought to be deemed a sufficient obstacle. If we take a limited view of slavery, (for it is too horrible for an extensive insight,) its evils are so obvious—the injustice of it so glaring—and the injury the slave sustains by a continuation of it, is so palpable, that none but the most wicked, rapacious, and depraved, can countenance it. The colonies teem with barbarians—They are overrun with Levites, and scarcely a Samaritan is to be found. It is impossible to find a rich man, without a sable *Lazarus* laying at his gate—nor has it the soothing sound of a parable—it is an incontrovertible truth.

Ladies and Gentleman, if therefore you hold in abhorrence a system, which is of all others, the most productive of misery and crime,—if you would resist the most sanguinary acts of injustice and blood—if you would protect the injured—the innocent and oppressed—if you would regard that monitor which is placed in your breasts, to enable you to distinguish right from wrong—if you would enlist in the sacred cause of justice—if you would be influenced by the opinions and actions of the best, the greatest and wisest of men—if you despise avarice, rapacity and oppression; I conjure you to come forward with an undeviating step—with a firm resolution to abolish that accursed—that abhorred slavery of our West India settlements, so repugnant to the laws of God, and so disgraceful to man.

Several Resolutions were then read and carried, and a Petition praying the Total Extinction of Colonial Slavery adopted.